

Organization of  
*Candlelight Reflections*



*to honor, hope and remember...*

 **alzheimer's association<sup>®</sup>**  
nc family caregiver support program 

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# Candlelight Reflections

Wednesday, November 1, 2006

***A STATEWIDE EVENT TO HONOR ALL THE LIVES  
AFFECTED BY ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE AND RELATED DISORDERS  
AND ALL FAMILY CAREGIVERS.***

*When you light your candle tonight, light it not only in memory and support of your loved one, but light it in hope and commitment as well.*

— Chris Adkins, in honor of his father

*Candlelight Reflections* is a beautiful and moving experience. It can serve many roles—heightening public awareness of Alzheimer's disease and caregiver issues, honoring and supporting family caregivers and individuals with dementia, and strengthening statewide advocacy efforts.

Several years ago, the Eastern North Carolina and Western Carolina Alzheimer's Association Chapters created *Candlelight Reflections* to bring together Alzheimer's families, friends, and supporters. This year, in an effort to further increase awareness about dementia and its effect on families, the NC Alzheimer's Support network is joining the NC Family Caregiver Support Program to honor all families and friends taking on the role of caregiving and/or living with dementia. *Candlelight Reflections* will be a momentous beginning to both National and NC Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month and Family Caregiver Month.

*Candlelight Reflections* can:

- build awareness in the community about the valuable contributions and unique needs of family caregivers;
- help educate the public about Alzheimer's disease and related disorders, dementia care, and available support services;
- elicit support for state and federal legislation to strengthen support for family caregivers;
- encourage positive changes in the workplace to support caregiving families and individuals with dementia;
- create opportunities for volunteer recruitment as well as "neighbor helping neighbor" efforts;
- motivate people in the community to become more involved in local Alzheimer's Association Chapter activities and other ways to support family caregivers; and
- provide public relations materials and educational resources to local media, faith communities, and other entities who can share the message.

We challenge you to think broadly when planning the groups and individuals you will contact for participation, sponsorship, planning assistance, and attendance at your local event. Families, individuals, corporations, small businesses, public officials, educators, human service agencies, faith communities, ministerial associations, health clubs, healthcare professionals, civic and social club, etc., are among the vast possibilities.

People are encouraged to participate as a means of demonstrating respect, concern and support for family caregivers and all the lives affected by Alzheimer's disease and related disorders.



# Candlelight Reflections

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## Organization of Candlelight Reflections

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### *Getting Started*—What will you need?

- **SITE COORDINATOR**

- form a working committee (or a committee which will select a coordinator)

- **LOGISTICS PERSON**

- find a location
  - get permits if needed
  - secure sound system
  - secure adequate parking

- **RESOURCE DEVELOPER**

- secure contributions for the event and its promotion

- **PUBLIC RELATIONS PERSON**

- contact local media to secure maximum coverage and attendance

- **COORDINATOR OF VOLUNTEERS to:**

- distribute promotional materials and event reminders
  - stuff envelopes
  - distribute flyers
  - make phone calls
  - send e-mails, etc.

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The following support information  
will help you develop your

*Candlelight Reflections*

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## PULLING IT ALL TOGETHER: LOGISTICS TO CONSIDER

You will get better turnout results and more local participation and support if you allow at least 60 days lead time for your event. As you develop the details for your *Candlelight Reflections*, it will help to consider the following:

- ✓ **Date and Time:** November 1, 2006 at approximately 6:00-6:30 p.m. (The start and end time may vary due to local considerations.) *The actual lighting of the candles will take place at 7:00 p.m. across the state.*
  - ✓ **Location:** Possibilities may include churches, hospitals, civic buildings, schools, town squares, or any site which is easily accessible by large numbers of people.
  - ✓ **Permits:** Check with local officials regarding permits which may be necessary to obtain for the event.
  - ✓ **Sound System:** Guest speakers will probably require microphones. Check with available local resources and volunteers who are familiar with the operation of the sound system you plan to use.
  - ✓ **Parking/Safety:** Since the events will be at night, check to make sure that sites have ample and secure parking nearby. Enlisting volunteers, especially for public areas, will aid attendees to park quickly and safely.
  - ✓ **Rain Contingency:** Planning for bad weather is important. For outdoor events, alternative locations should be secured in the event of rain or inclement weather. If more than one organization is conducting *Candlelight Reflections* in your area, coordinating with planners at churches, synagogues, mosques, schools, hospitals, etc. for such possibilities could make a significant difference in turnout.
  - ✓ **Materials:** Try to solicit local merchants, community leaders or other organizations for candle donations. List them in programs as sponsors, friends, supporters, etc. They will get a tax write-off and free advertising. Additionally, you may want to have colored lapel ribbons, buttons, flowers, or some other item to serve as reminders/advertising tools before your event, as well as to hand out to attendees during the service.
  - ✓ **Funding:** It is probably to your advantage to get a head start to find funding sources to make your event a success. You will need money/donations/commitments of gifts for all your preliminary materials and for securing the site/permits. Find local merchants, community leaders, religious and civic organizations, etc. to help in the costs of printing programs, postage for mailing invitations, candles for the service, phone calls to make all arrangements, advertising in local newspapers, and Public Service Announcements (PSAs) on local radio/television programming.
  - ✓ **Work with Local Media:** See notes on **Promotion** on the following page.
  - ✓ **Be Creative:** You have a lot more resources than you may realize. Making early phone calls and visits to potential supporters can make it enjoyable and meaningful for you and all involved.
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## PROMOTION

November is National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month and Family Caregiver Month. To kick off the month of recognition, the North Carolina Alzheimer's Support Program and Family Caregiver Support Program are promoting statewide *Candlelight Reflections*.

*Candlelight Reflections* will be a joint effort to heighten public awareness about Alzheimer's disease and related disorders and the need to recognize and support family caregivers. This event will be a special time to pay respect to those who have died of Alzheimer's as well as honor those individuals and families who are presently living with the disease. It will also be an important time to express gratitude and appreciation to family caregivers for their invaluable contributions.

Each county and/or individual community is strongly encouraged to host *Candlelight Reflections* on Wednesday, November 1, 2006 beginning around 6:00-6:30 p.m. **The actual lighting of the candles will take place at 7:00 p.m. across North Carolina.**

An event of this magnitude should have greater impact on state policy makers and the general public. It will also create unique opportunities to connect with others facing similar life challenges.

**How you promote and coordinate your local program as well as the frequency and type of promotional activities will have a significant impact on the success of your event.**

**Promotional efforts may include:**

- ✓ **Press Releases:** Send to radio and TV stations and daily and weekly newspapers. Use the template Public Service Announcement (PSA) for general information about Alzheimer's disease and family caregivers, then personalize the PSA with specific details.
  - ✓ **Special Interest Stories:** A local family or individual may wish to tell their own experience of caregiving and/or living with dementia. If local newspapers are well staffed, attempt to get a staff writer to help write a feature article or possibly a series prior to and during the month. The series could include a variety of caregiving situations and personal stories (e.g., Alzheimer's disease, stroke, diabetes, etc.)
  - ✓ **Frequent Announcements:** Ask churches, synagogues, mosques, etc. to announce the event at services and include it in weekly programs. Those religious institutions holding a Wednesday evening service may want to consider incorporating *Candlelight Reflections* on November 1st. Contact other local organizations with newsletters, web sites, listserv, etc. to assist in promoting the event.
  - ✓ **Support Groups:** Ask facilitators or local support groups to be sure that all members know about the event and can help recruit participants.
  - ✓ **Spread the Word:** Send updated information to the Alzheimer's Association Chapter offices to post on web sites and use in newsletters.
  - ✓ **Statewide Flyer:** In the supplied statewide flyer, there is space to insert specific site and event details.
  - ✓ **Be Creative:** If you find a marketing and/or outreach strategy that is working well, please let us know so we can share your ideas with others across the state.
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## MAXIMIZE TURNOUT: WHO TO INVITE

Basically, ***EVERYONE!*** But here's a list which will help you get started.

- ✓ **Local Alzheimer's Support Groups and other Caregiver Support Groups**
  - ✓ **Directors and Personnel of Long Term Care Facilities**
  - ✓ **Leaders and Members of the Faith Community**
  - ✓ **Health and Human Service Professionals** (i.e., Adult Day Service Programs, Home Care and Hospice Agencies, Senior Centers, etc.)
  - ✓ **Local Aging and Adult Services Staff**
  - ✓ **City/County Government Officials**
  - ✓ **Aging Advocates**
  - ✓ **Civic and Professional Groups**
    - Pilot Club
    - Rotary Club
    - Kiwanis
    - Police/Firemen
    - Girl Scouts/Boy Scouts
    - American Business Women's Association
    - Junior League
    - Retired Government Employees
    - Lawyers/Accountants
    - Many others (share ideas)
  - ✓ **Local organizations may offer to serve as co-sponsors.** Encourage as much collaboration and community involvement as possible.
  - ✓ **For each person or group you contact, be sure to encourage that *Everyone Bring a Friend.***
  - ✓ **Consider Respite Care:** Family members may wish to attend but are obligated to stay home and care for a loved one. If respite care can be arranged, let them know the service is available as a way of supporting and honoring all of their caregiving efforts.
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## PROGRAM

We encourage all community events to follow a similar program so that candles will be lit across the state at the same time (7:00 p.m).

The following is a suggested program format:

- ✓ **Inspirational music before event as people arrive**
  - ✓ **Welcoming remarks**  
(a local personality, mayor, civic leader, Alzheimer's Association staff, AAA Family Caregiver Resource Specialists, etc.)
  - ✓ **An update** on Alzheimer's and family caregiver information and/or programs along with a description of the services available from local Alzheimer's Association Chapters and Family Caregiver Support Programs
  - ✓ **Governor's Proclamations** (to be distributed upon release)  
(ask mayor, civic leader, minister to read)
  - ✓ **Poem Reading** (i.e., "Hands All Around Me" or "Remember Me"—you may consider asking a person with early dementia or a caregiver to read)
  - ✓ **Optional Prayer** (i.e. "The Alzheimer's Prayer" or "The Caregiver's Prayer")
  - ✓ **The Lighting of Candles 7:00 p.m.**
  - ✓ **Optional Naming Ritual:** as candles are being lit, people may want to say names aloud—individuals, caregivers and/or families— as a way of honoring them and/or asking that they be remembered in your thoughts and prayers
  - ✓ **Inspirational Music** as the event closes and everyone leaves.
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## FOLLOW-UP

Writing or calling to thank those involved in the promotion, coordination, and production of your event will encourage future involvement and interest.

- ✓ **Committee Members**
- ✓ **Your Honorary Chairperson(s)**
- ✓ **Volunteers**
- ✓ **Media Staff**
- ✓ **Sponsors and Supporters**
- ✓ **Site Host(s)**
- ✓ **Event Speakers**
- ✓ **Special Guests**
- ✓ **Individuals and Family Members** who took the time to participate.

*Consider placing a  
“Thank You Letter”  
in local newspapers,  
local radio calendar  
event shows, etc.*

